

THE WASHINGTON DAILY MAGAZINE PAGE

Relation of Grammar to Marriage

Lack of Smaller Perceptions Indication of Mental Attitude That May Mar Life Happiness—Tact An Essential.

By WINIFRED BLACK.

MAN sued for divorce out West the other day because his wife objected to his grammar. "It ain't no use, Judge," said the man, "that woman ain't never going to let me have no peace. She jest nag me night and day because she says I don't talk right. And I ain't got no for to stand it another minute."

The Judge refused the divorce. He said there were not sufficient grounds for an action. But the woman in the case did not go home with her husband, as the Judge advised her to do. She went home to mother.

"And I'm going to stay there, too," she said. "I'm going to live the rest of my life with people who have sense enough to speak correctly, whether they have anything to say or not."

It All Depends.

I wish I could have had a talk with that woman. I would have liked to ask her what she thought of the man's grammar or lack of it when she married him.

Perhaps she hoped she could teach him. Which do you sympathize with in this case, the man or the woman?

It seems to me it all depends. One of the wisest, clearest, and kindest creatures I ever knew couldn't speak a sentence correctly to save his life, and I'd go across a continent to help him or any of his out of trouble any day of the week.

I'd rejoice with him or weep with him. I'd hate his enemies and love his friends, but I would never, never marry into his family.

Not because I think myself one-half his equal, but because I know I could not stand daily life with a man so lacking in the smaller perceptions that he has not yet been able to learn that two "noes" mean "yes" even when you're talking dialect.

Grammar and Marriage.

It isn't what a woman does or does not do that makes it impossible for a certain type of man to live with her in peace. It is the quality within that makes her do or not do these certain things.

A man who goes to public school, transacts business with educated people, marries an educated woman and still talks as if he couldn't read and write may be a saint, and shrewd saint at that, but there's something lacking, somewhere, as the new saying is, of the man who had been raised in the saddle and couldn't tell a bucking bronco from a cavalry mount just by the look of him.

I know a woman who says "haint" when she should say "isn't."

A Shrewd Observation.

Do you think I would trust that woman with a delicate piece of diplomacy or a difficult matter of business?

I would not. No woman with sense enough to tell whether a check must be certified or not to be of any good would say "haint," and go on saying it to the end of time, no matter how many people she heard saying "isn't."

A very shrewd observer told me once never to entirely trust a man who wore his hat on one side.

"There's something the matter with him or he wouldn't do it," said the shrewd observer. "Either his head's one-sided, or the outside, or his brain is crooked inside."

I've often wondered if there is any truth in what the shrewd observer thought he had observed.

What Is Indicated.

A girl came to me not long ago to talk about taking up newspaper work as a profession.

She was a pretty girl, well dressed and of very pleasing manners.

"I'm just crazy about newspaper work," she said, "meeting all the different people, and all—it must be so exciting. I'm going to be a newspaper woman."

"I don't care what anybody says," she said, "my people are awfully against it. My mother can't even bear to hear me mention it, and all the family would be shocked to death, but I don't care—I'm going to be one. If I am never asked to another party as long as I live."

"You will never be one," said I.

"Why not?" said the girl.

"Because you have no tact," said I, "and I suppose that girl is wondering yet whether she has such an absurd impression."

Fancy a person who has no more tact than to talk to a newspaper woman about her "shocking profession" going to interview a murderer or a scoundrel, a college president in the afternoon and a ballet dancer at night, and making herself at least tolerable to each.

The Trouble With Her.

Now, what was the matter with that girl was not what she said, but the fact that she meant it when she said it.

The thing that keeps the man who says "haint" out of a job isn't the word "haint," but the fact he isn't ambitious enough or observing enough or determined enough to keep himself from saying it.

The woman who has gone home to mother because her husband would insist on using atrocious grammar, I wonder what her next mistake will be.

Will she marry a school teacher who will make her support him while he writes a text book on the double negative and its use in the dialect poem?

Probably the same trait that made her choose the wrong man this time will be apt to go right on working as long as she lives.

Why He Did It.

At one of the military camps some recruits were being put through the riding test, says London Tit-Bits. One man didn't know much about horses, but trusted to luck to get through.

He had not properly adjusted his saddle, and on mounting he swung his body between its legs, where he was suspended for a few seconds.

"Hi, there," yelled the non-com. in decision, "call that riding, do you?"

"Oh, no, sergeant," was the instant answer, "that's a new trick for the Dardanelles. Riding under here's a fine protection from the sun."

"Women Will Never Win Battle for Vote Until They Learn to Speak Convincingly"

Suffrage Lost in the East Because They Were Not Prepared to Compete With Men Oratorically, Declares Mrs. Eleanor Newman Buckler.

"WOMEN will never get the vote until they are prepared to speak convincingly from the platform."

"Suffrage was lost in the East because the women were not prepared to compete with the men oratorically."

In these days of military preparedness, the above statements by Mrs. Eleanor Newman Buckler sound a note concerning another kind of munitions of war. Mrs. Buckler frankly admits that "speaking"—not elocution, but it understood—is her own particular hobby, and she is to give a series of lectures on "The Art of Public Speaking" before the Anthony League this winter. Just to show that her interests are varied, it may be added that she is an officer of the District branch of the Woman's National Rivers and Harbors Congress.

The Necessary First Step.

Having defined her platform, she continued, with a humorous quirk to the corners of her mouth as she spoke:

"It's the sad truth that when the average woman takes the platform to speak, she makes as much impression on an audience as a mosquito from Alexandria county! Women aren't prepared for that sort of thing, that's the trouble. Just imagine the situation of a careless hostess at a formal dinner who made the announcement that the rest of the dinner hadn't arrived from the grocer's as yet! It's the very same when men are invited to attend suffrage meetings and the women cannot speak with ease and convincingly."

"One of the first steps that must be taken to remedy this situation is the improvement of English, both in diction and grammar. If an audience of college men hears a prominent woman speaker say 'between you and I' they are likely to be amused rather than impressed by what the woman has to say. Let men see that women are capable of competing with them oratorically. To be sure, it's a matter of industry, of hard work, and constant application."

Must Be Well Groomed.

Women are naturally the mothers of mankind, from the time they clutch their rag dolls as babies till they knot their grandsons' ties with trembling fingers. As mothers, they should protect their sons, they should put themselves in a position to appear before an audience in the way that will win them consideration.

"A woman on the platform should be modest. There should be no slapping on the back or half-fellow-well-met attitude on the part of the woman who seeks public life. She must—and this is primarily essential—be well-groomed. Her clothing does not need to be elegant, but it must be neat and preferably of dark material."

"The gentleman should be well poised, otherwise she cannot command attention. She should not be forced to lean on a reading desk or a chair for support, but stand firmly on her own two feet. Isn't it a common sight to behold a woman conducting a meeting leaning on a table and behaving as if her knees were fairly knocking together?"

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